

# GREEN BROOK FLOOD CONTROL COMMISSION

# NEWSLETTER

111 GREENBROOK ROAD, GREEN BROOK, NEW JERSEY 08812

VOLUME XV, NUMBER 2

MARCH 2001

## **A SCENIC SECTION OF MIDDLESEX BOROUGH**

Raritan Avenue in Middlesex Borough is a pleasing place. A wide roadway, with gentle curves and slopes, lined with mature trees, and the gently flowing Ambrose Brook nearby.

Long ago houses gradually lined the eastern side of Raritan Avenue.

The western side of Raritan Avenue slopes down to a grassy area along the Ambrose Brook.

## **MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY: NEW HOUSES**

In the middle of the last century, ten new houses were built on the western side of Raritan Avenue.

For most of the time, those ten houses have been a rather pleasant place to live, with deep lots running down to the Ambrose Brook, the other side of which is wooded and undeveloped.

But all ten houses suffer from a fundamental flaw. In very severe rainstorms, the kind that don't happen very often, all ten houses are subject to flooding.

## **THE ORIGINAL PLAN FOR PROTECTION**

The original plan for protection, approved in 1997 by the Federal government, the State of New Jersey, and by the Green Brook Flood Control Commission, called for an earthen levee along the bank of the Ambrose Brook to hold back flood waters safely away from those houses.

That levee was planned to extend down along the Ambrose Brook to its confluence with the Green Brook.

The planned levee was to continue down along the bank of the Green Brook, to provide protection for an industrial building, as well as protection for two nearby gasoline stations.

## **FLOODING BY FLOYD**

All ten families suffered badly in the Floyd flood of September 1999. And that was not the first time. They have suffered repeatedly from flooding. They have had enough. These residents made their wishes known to the officials of Middlesex Borough:

***They asked that their ten houses be purchased, and the area turned into open space.***

## **STANDING IN THE RAIN AND PLEADING**

At the May 2000 meeting of the Commission, these people gathered in the rain outside of the building in which the Commission was holding its monthly meeting.

Accompanied by Middlesex Council President John Fuhrmann, they stood in the rain and held signs. They politely but very firmly made their wishes known: ***Buy us out.***

The Commission had recognized their very difficult situation, and at that very same time, in their meeting inside, was considering a resolution addressed to the Federal and State Authorities, urging that the plans for protection be changed. Instead of a levee to protect those ten houses, and the business buildings farther downstream, the Commission went on record urging that the plans for flood protection be changed, and instead of the levee, these ten houses should be purchased and removed.

## **THE FEDERAL AND STATE AUTHORITIES ACTED**

Late last year, the Federal and State Authorities agreed to provide the money needed to do what the residents wanted: The ten houses are to be purchased, and the owners will be paid the full market value.

## **EVOLVING A NEW PLAN**

The Federal and State Authorities, in cooperation with the Commission, are now working out the details of a new plan to provide appropriate protection for the three business buildings.

With the infusion of the new money from the Federal and State Authorities, and the money saved by the elimination of the levee, the Federal, the State, the officials of Middlesex Borough, and the Commission are now working out ways to provide protection for the remaining business buildings.

All of the officials involved (Federal, State, Middlesex Borough and the Commission) are determined to find agreeable and fair protection.